

REMARKS

Claims 48-56 and 61 are now pending in the application. Claims 57-60 have been canceled without disclaimer of the subject matter contained therein.

Independent claims 56 and 61 were previously allowed.

Claims 48 and 55 are the only independent claims that stand rejected. Claims 48 and 55 both previously recited a “cage positioned in the coating chamber above the vibration source.” With this amendment, claims 48 and 55 have been amended to recite “a cage for supporting a medical device to be coated, the cage positioned in the coating chamber.”

Claims 48 and 55 were rejected under 35 USC §103(a) on grounds that they were considered unpatentable over Alkan in view of Gronholz et al., Zingerman, Opalski and/or Berg. Reconsideration of these rejections is respectfully requested.

The Applicant’s invention is directed to a coating system for coating medical devices, such as stents or other suitable medical devices. As recited in claims 48 and 55, the coating system comprises a coating chamber; a cage for supporting a medical device to be coated, the cage positioned in the coating chamber; a vibration source having a diaphragm exposed to the coating chamber, the vibration source configured to generate pressure waves sufficient to suspend the cage positioned in the coating chamber above the vibration source without the vibration source contacting the cage; and a coating source, the coating source positioned to introduce coating into the coating chamber.

The Alkan device is not designed for coating medical devices but is instead designed for coating materials such as “coated tablets, pellets or granules.” (1:7-8). In the Applicant’s invention, because of the delicate nature of medical devices such as stents that are to be coated, the Applicant’s coating system employs protective cages for supporting the medical device to be

coated. The vibration source as claimed in the Applicant's claims 48 and 55 is configured to generate pressure waves sufficient to suspend the cage positioned in the coating chamber above the vibration source without the vibration source contacting the cage. In this manner the medical device is protected from damage.

The Alkan device is not for coating medical devices, and it does not disclose or suggest cages for protecting medical devices. Because the Alkan device is not designed for coating medical devices, there is no suggestion or reason for adding protective cages to the Alkan device. They are simply of no use in coating the tablets/pellets of Alkan. The other cited references do not suggest altering Alkan from its intended purpose of coating tablets/pellets and the like, and, accordingly, they do not suggest the protective cages in combination with the other features as claimed by the Applicant.

For the foregoing reasons, reconsideration and allowance is requested as to each of the pending claims. Should the Examiner have any questions, the Examiner is encouraged to contact the undersigned at the telephone number indicated below. The Commissioner is authorized to charge any fees or credit any overpayments which may be incurred in connection with this paper under 37 C.F.R. §§ 1.16 or 1.17 to Deposit Account No. 11-0600.

Respectfully submitted,

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